

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 /065 W
-----115980 130506Z /14

R 120035Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2507
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY SUVA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC HONOLULU/POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 1101

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV PP
SUBJ: SOMARE'S PROBLEMS AHEAD

REF: PORT MORESBY 1078

1. SOMARE'S REELECTION AS HEAD OF THE PANGU-PPP COALITION IS ONE OF FEW INSTANCES IN THIS AREA OF THE WORLD DURING PAST YEAR OR SO WHEN THE INS STAYED IN AFTER A FREE AND RELATIVELY HONEST ELECTION. THIS FRUSTRATES BASIC CONSERVATISM AND CAUTION OF

PAPUA NEW GUINEANS AND THEIR DISINCLINATION TO GAMBLE WITH THE FUTURE.

2. SOMARE IS NOW IN STRONGER POSITION IN PARLIAMENT, AND WILL FEEL A GREATER SELF-CONFIDENCE AFTER BEING RETURNED IN POST-INDEPENDENCE ELECTION WITH STRONG MAJORITY. SOMARE'S VICTORY, HOWEVER, IS NOT AS GREAT AS PRESS IS PROCLAIMING IT
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TO BE AND I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE SOME OF PROBLEMS AHEAD.

3. NEW CABINET IS STRONGER IN TERMS OF EDUCATION AND PERSONAL QUALITIES THAN PREVIOUS, BUT STILL CONTAINS SOME WEAK AND / OR VERY INEXPERIENCED MEMBERS WHO WILL HAVE TROUBLE LIVING UP TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES. UPPER LEVELS OF GPNG HAVE DEVOTED MUCH OF 1977 TO ELECTION, AND BIG BACKLOG OF BUSINESS HAS

ACCUMULATED.

4. EXPECTATIONS HAVE RISEN AS THE RESULT OF THE NUMBER OF ELECTION PROMISES MADE AND BY THE VAST AMOUNT OF CRITICISM HEAPED ON THE GOVERNMENT FOR NOT GIVING EACH ELECTORATE ITS SO CALLED RIGHTFUL SHARE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOODIES. FURTHER, THESE EXPECTATIONS ARE COMING INTO FOCUS ON A REGIONAL BASIS, WHICH WILL MAKE THEM HARDER FOR SOMARE TO DEAL WITH. THE PRESSURES ON THE GOVERNMENT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WILL GROW RAPIDLY.

5. WEAKNESS OF PARTY DISCIPLINE WILL CREATE EROSION OF SOMARE'S MAJORITY BEGINNING AT A VERY EARLY STAGE. SOMARE CAN EXPECT DEFECTIONS FROM HIS RANKS AS HIS SUPPORTERS BECOME DISCONTENTED. SERIOUS INFIGHTING IN CABINET IS ANTICIPATED. DEPUTY PM CHAN AND DECENTRALIZATION MINISTER MOMIS (BOTH FROM NEW GUINEA ISLANDS, BOTH CATHOLICS, BOTH PART CHINESE) ARE BITTERLY OPPOSED ON MANY IMPORTANT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES. BOTH ARE ARTICULATE, GOOD DEBATERS AND STRONG PERSONALITIES. BOTH WILL EXPECT TO PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN CABINET. MOMIS WILL USE THREAT OF RESIGNATION TO TRY TO GET HIS WAY.

6. OPPOSITION WILL CONTAIN STRONG AND FORCEFUL SPOKESMEN WHO WILL GIVE SOMARE GOVERNMENT MUCH SHARPER AND MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE CRITICISM THAN IN PAST. SIR TEI ABAL WILL PRESUMABLY CONTINUE AS LEADER OF OPPOSITION, BUT MOST VIGOROUS SPOKESMEN WILL BE FORMER GOVERNOR GENERAL SIR JOHN GUISE, LONG-TIME PARLIAMENTARIAN AND CONFIDENTIAL

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FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, AND JAMES MOPIO, PARLIAMENTARY LEADER OF PAPUA BESENA. MOPIO'S APPROACH TO PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES ON OPENING DAY SUGGESTED HE WILL PLAY DISRUPTIVE ROLE DURING SESSION. GUISE IS FULLY AS SKILLED IN DEBATE AS SOMARE, AND HAS A MORE COMMANDING PRESENCE. SOMARE IS SENSITIVE TO CRITICISM AND WILL HAVE MANY UNCOMFORTABLE HOURS IN THE PARLIAMENT.

7. ABOVE PROBLEMS ARE SUPERIMPOSED ON VERY BASIC DIFFICULTIES SUCH AS DEEP DIVISIONS BY LANGUAGE AND CLAN, WIDESPREAD ILLITERACY, DEARTH OF TRAINED AND EXPERIENCED PERSONNEL, LIMITED COMMUNICATIONS, RUGGED TERRAIN, ETC. SOME POLITICAL OBSERVERS ARE SAYING THAT NEW CABINET WILL NOT LAST FOR MORE THAN A YEAR. WHILE THIS SEEMS RATHER PESSIMISTIC, DEPT SHOULD REALIZE THAT SOMARE HAS A TOUGH TIME AHEAD OF HIM.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY UNITY, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PORTM01101
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770292-0331
Format: TEL
From: PORT MORESBY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770867/aaaacems.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8049755b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 PORT MORESBY 1078
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1617095
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOMARE\S PROBLEMS AHEAD
TAGS: PGOV, PP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8049755b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009